

## Undersea, Not Air Warfare, Greatest Threat to Britain

Small, Fast Cargo Ships Are Needed  
More Than Planes, Minister Says

This is the last in a series of uncensored articles by the editor of the newspaper PM, who recently returned from London.

By RALPH INGERSOLL.

The bad news in Great Britain while I was there was not of the air war, which was daily perfecting its defensive and offensive technique, but of the less publicized submarine war. It was generally known amongst the informed that losses from submarine action were "too high," "serious." This was before losses from the German raider were reported.

Ronald Cross, who is the Minister for Shipping, told me that what he thought Great Britain needed from America was not planes but small, fast cargo ships. Small, fast, so that they could get away from submarines. The submarine is very successful in stalking a convoy moving at 12 knots or less. It can locate its prey without coming up, maneuvering under water to within striking distance.

Within striking distance a big convoy is easy prey for a submarine. All it has to do is to loose all its torpedoes one after another in a straight line across the convoy's path. Some of the torpedoes are bound to hit some of the ships.

Many informed people in Great Britain suspect that the submarines are using bases in Ireland. There are many stories of submarine crews being seen in the cafes in Dublin out of uniform. Whether German submarines do or do not use Ireland, they have nevertheless reversed the disadvantage they were under in the last war.

Widely Separated Bases.

Then German submarines entered the Atlantic through the narrow channel. The British surrounded this opening and the British in turn had a wide base for their own shipping across the Atlantic, being able to sail to and from any port in the British Isles. Now this position is exactly reversed. British shipping must enter the Atlantic from a narrow base—the ports on the west coast of England. Whereas the Germans—leaving Ireland out of it—can operate their submarines from widely separated bases, all the German-held coast being available.

The English still try to mine up the German submarines, of course, and the English shipping can hardly be said to be bottled up as the Germans were in the last war. But broadly speaking the tables are turned and the small German submarine fleet is making the most of it. Members of the air force thought that when they were richer in American reconnaissance planes they could cut down these submarine losses by wider and wider patrols.

But as of this writing I consider submarine warfare the most successful and dangerous of all the Axis' various operations against Great Britain.

Industrial Damage Small.

A number of industrial establishments producing military aircraft or parts were severely damaged during the first two weeks in September. Other industrial properties, military and non-military, were also damaged at this time. Since the last of the successful mass daylight raids on September 15, German bombers have done very little damage to industrial plants. The damage done in the early part of September has been repaired, so that there is agreement that military production in England is again at or within a few per cent of production at the beginning of September.

It is hard to say whether this is good news or bad. Great Britain had been increasing its production steadily until the first of September. But for the bomb damage then its production would be much higher now. But on the other hand, the September damage has been repaired and production is now increasing steadily.

I found no evidence that any material news of industrial damage was currently being suppressed—although there is no doubt that in September the British did minimize the effects of a very severe blow dealt to them then.

Spotters Stationed on Roofs.

One device by which the British are currently maintaining and increasing production is by the training and stationing of spotters on the roofs of factories engaged in 24-hour production. With a trained spotter on the roof—a spotter who can distinguish his own from enemy aircraft and who is familiar with the ways of bombs and bombers

workers in the factory may continue at their posts until the last minute when safety demands they leave their work and go to the shelters. Good spotters have improved the morale in factories.

Industrial production is dispersed. Total destruction of no single factory could stop the production of a vital part of the war machine.

While many people criticize the effectiveness of the balloon barrage over London, there has never been a successful dive bombing operation against a factory protected by a tight balloon barrage.

**Bombers Ambushed.**  
One factory I was told about makes airplane motors and is guarded by local squadrons. One afternoon in September a large flight of enemy bombers was reported approaching it. The fighters took to the air. The bombers arrived, passed the factory and were chased across country by the fighters. As soon as the fighters were out of sight, a second German squadron appeared and let go on the factory. Damage would have been greater had not the bomber squadron been attacked by a lone English fighter, who dove into it with such abandon that he partially broke the formation. Eye witnesses described this to me. But the factory was hit and was out of production for some weeks.

The second half of the story: A short time after this same factory was in production again, the Germans played the same trick. The fighter squadrons again went after the first flight. They were a low ceiling of clouds four or five thousand feet up. The second flight of bombers came on schedule just under the clouds. But as they approached the plant the defending pursuit ships came down out of the clouds in a solid formation. They had pretended to be lured into the trap and now took their vengeance. The bombers were cut to bits, never reached their target. The factory is in full production and has not been hit since.

**No Shortage of Fighters.**  
I gathered much evidence around various airports, including experimental ones, confirming the fact that there was no shortage of Spitfires or Hurricanes in England. There are enough, for instance, so that many squadrons are being re-equipped with equipment that increases the range and maximum altitude at which they can fight. And new squadrons of newly trained men are going into action. There was similar evidence that there is no shortage of pilot material. The only complaint I heard was from fighter pilots who felt they were being forced to take too much rest.

There are 1,800 Polish pilots in England and four or five thousand other Polish soldiers. The Polish pilots are the talk of London. They are all veterans and they are the

most experienced fighter pilots in the British air force. Almost every squadron has a Pole or two attached to it and the Poles also have a squadron of their own.

There was a funny story on the censorship around London when I was there. The censorship refused to pass the true statement that the Polish squadron had the finest record for destroying German planes in the R. A. F. English commanders in the R. A. F. were outraged. They were back of the Poles and they wanted them to get credit for their record. So they appealed to the censorship. After some debate the following statement was passed: "The Polish command of the Polish squadron says its record is the best in the R. A. F."

**Scots Learn Polish.**

The Poles wear regular R. A. F. uniforms with little labels on the arms just below the shoulders. Few of them speak any English. At the beginning of the war they were very nervous about the possibility of having to bail out over England and come down in their parachutes. They were afraid that because they did not speak English people would shoot them for Germans. So every Pole was taught to parrot these sentences: "I am a Pole. I am a member of the Royal Air Force. I am a Pole. I am a member of the Royal Air Force."

People say now that when Poles who are shot down reappear at headquarters they always have a girl on each arm. They say the girls cannot resist the Poles, nor the Poles the girls.

Their squadron is in Scotland and they say that instead of the Poles learning English the storekeepers are learning Polish.

THE END.  
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### P. C. A. Officials Inspect New National Airport

Washington National Airport, at Gravelly Point, was inspected yesterday by officials of Pennsylvania-Central Airlines in preparation for transfer to the new airport next year of operations now conducted at Washington Airport and maintenance and overhaul operations now carried on at the company's headquarters in Pittsburgh. Appointment of Maj. Lucian W. Clay, Army Corps of Engineers, secretary to the Civil Aeronautics Administration Board of Airport Approval, to represent the administration on the Interdepartmental Engineering Commission, was announced yesterday.

Maj. Clay replaces Lt. Col. Sumpter Smith, who resigned last week to go into active service as air officer of the 31st Division, Alabama National Guard. Col. Smith was chairman of the commission. Fred E. Schnepfe, representative of the Public Works Administration on the commission, has been named acting chairman pending the election by the commission of a permanent head to succeed Col. Smith.

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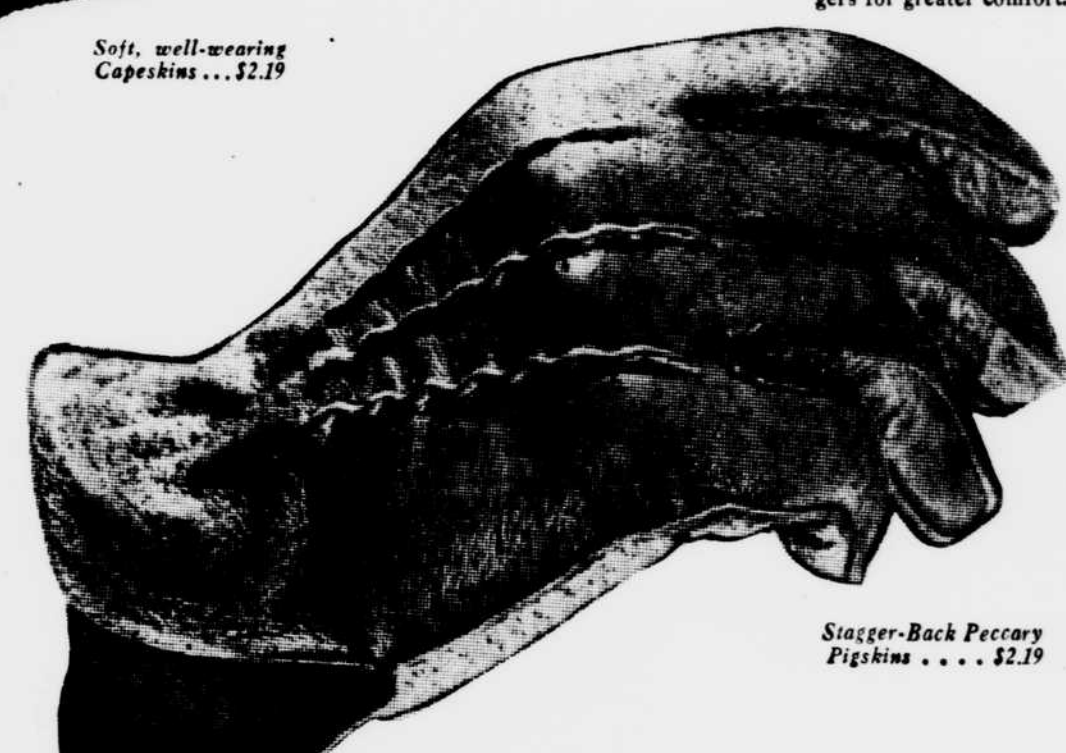
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## Papa Dionne's Double

His name's John Qualen and he has three little girls of his own. But to movie fans he's papa to the Quints. He's played the part in so many pictures that some visitors to the Quints' home call the real Mr. Dionne an imposter. Let Donald Hough, noted screen writer, tell you the whole story of John Qualen. You'll find it next Sunday in THIS WEEK Magazine, with

The Sunday Star